



Advocates seek more say in how opioid settlements are spent



The Mobilize Recovery bus is parked on Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House in Washington, Friday, Sept. 23, 2022.

Associated Press

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Advocates seek more say in how opioid settlements are spent

By **GEOFF MULVIHILL** and
SAMANTHA HENDRICKSON
 Associated Press/Report for
 America

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) —
 The tattoos on Billie Stafford's hands — inspired by street art and full of references to her work helping prevent drug-related deaths — have become an indelible memorial to the friend who inked them and the opioid crisis that killed him in April.

As a panel starts considering how to distribute Ohio's share of multimillion-dollar legal settlements with drug-makers and distributors over the toll of opioids, Stafford is concerned that most of the members don't bring that same burden of personal loss to their spending recommendations.

"They don't have to come and write 20 names on a (memorial) wall because everyone's dying," said Stafford, whose friend David Seymour died of an overdose and who co-founded a group that supports people addicted to opioids and their loved ones.

Across the U.S., people in recovery and families of those who died from overdoses fear they won't be heard on the state-level panels recommending or deciding on the use of big pieces of proposed and finalized settlements, which are worth more than \$40 billion, according to an Associated Press tally.

The money is seen as crucial to stemming a crisis that deepened amid the coronavirus pandemic, with opioids involved in most of the record 107,000 overdose-related deaths in the U.S. last year.

"If we approach this in a very educated process, we have a real opportunity to move the needle for patients and families for generations to come," said Dr. Adam Scioli, the medical director at Caron Treatment Centers, which operates in several East Coast areas.

After money from 1990s tobacco settlements went to laying fiber-optic cable, repairing roads and other initiatives that had little to



Courtney Allen, far left, and Joseph Green, both organizers for Mobilize Recovery, applaud as Douglas Emhoff, husband of Vice President Kamala Harris, right, and Dr. Rahul Gupta, Director of National Drug Control Policy, second from right, sign the Mobilize Recovery bus parked Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House in Washington, Friday, Sept. 23, 2022.

Associated Press

do with public health, the opioid deals were crafted to direct most funds toward combatting the drug crisis. The settlements list strategies the money can fund, including paying for the overdose reversal drug naloxone; educating children about dangers of opioids; expanding screening and interventions for pregnant women; and helping people get into treatment. State and local governments have leeway, though.

For the people on a mission to stem drug deaths, the details matter. Advocates want to see the money used to make it easier to get treatment, to provide related housing, transportation and other services, and to provide materials to test drug supplies for fentanyl, the synthetic opioid involved in most recent fatal overdoses.

Two advocacy groups are on a monthlong "Mobilize Recovery" national bus tour, partly to push for representation of the recovery community — people in recovery, their families, families of those who died, and those who try to help all of them — in allocation decisions.

"The people closest to the problem are also closest to the solution," Voices Proj-

ect founder Ryan Hampton said.

In Ohio, critics say voices of those most impacted aren't reflected enough on the OneOhio Recovery Foundation board making spending decisions. Only a few of the 29 members have disclosed personal experiences — one identifying as a person in recovery for decades, one as the parent of someone with an addiction, and two who said they knew people with addictions. Most members are government officials. Just one is Black.

"Right now, we have no say-so and no representation as to how this money is going to be used to help us," said Nathaniel Jordan, executive director of Columbus Kappa Foundation, which works with low-income and Black communities, where opioid overdoses have been increasing.

An advocacy group sued the nonprofit OneOhio foundation in August over concerns about its transparency. OneOhio subsequently said it would voluntarily follow open meetings and public records laws that govern public agencies, though the lawsuit remains pending.

"The Board members are eager to engage the advocacy community and

Ohioans whose lives have been impacted by addiction because they know their feedback will improve the Foundation's work," OneOhio spokesperson Connie Luck said by email. The issue is not only who has seats on key committees, but also whether those closest to the crisis have clout.

Nevada included recovery community members such as Debi Nadler on the council advising the state on the more than \$300 million it is expected to get.

"My true thought is it's a dog-and-pony show," said Nadler, who founded the group Moms Against Drugs after her son died of an overdose.

Terry Kerns, the substance abuse and law enforcement coordinator for the Nevada attorney general's office, said the group is influenced by people in recovery and those who work with people using drugs — and that some people appointed to seats not set aside for those who have used opioids are also in recovery.

"I feel there's probably more than adequate representation," Kerns said.

Advocates say the shifting nature of the opioid crisis with the rise of fentanyl makes it important to listen

to people who are using drugs now.

"I've been in recovery for years," said Courtney Allen, the organizing director of the Maine Recovery Advocacy Project, who was appointed to a settlement advisory council in her state. "The substance-use crisis eight years ago was very different from the substance-use crisis today." In Wisconsin, Republican lawmakers thought Democratic Gov. Tony Evers' administration didn't do enough outreach to law enforcement as it made plans for spending \$31 million in settlement money for next year. So the GOP-led Joint Committee on Finance this month eliminated proposed funds for family support centers and trimmed other areas to set aside \$3 million for public safety agencies to use, including for treatment of jail inmates.

Rep. Mark Born, co-chair of the committee, said public safety workers deal with opioid issues even in far-flung communities not served by treatment facilities. "It's not just drug arrests," he said.

Jesse Heffernan, who is in recovery and co-owns an addiction recovery services business, is wary of the changes, which he said were made without the open input and research that went into the original plan. "When it turns into a partisan issue, communities lose," he said.

Advocates' push for clout has changed the situation in some states.

New York officials announced in July that the Opioid Fund Advisory Board would make recommendations on all settlement money after originally indicating the group would not have a say on most of the \$240 million-plus expected this year.

Board member Avi Israel, whose son died by suicide after years of addiction, says the group is still meeting too infrequently and not digging into the big decisions. He worries most money will end up going to state agencies.

Trump allies create a new super PAC called MAGA Inc.

By JILL COLVIN

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Top allies of former President Donald Trump are creating a new super PAC that's expected to serve as the main vehicle for his midterm spending and could become a key part of his campaign infrastructure should he move forward with a 2024 White House run.

The political action committee, called MAGA Inc., will supersede Trump's existing super PAC, Politico first reported. Paperwork for the new committee was filed Friday morning with the Federal Election Commission.

The buildout comes as Trump, a Republican, is under mounting legal pressure on multiple fronts. The Department of Justice has launched a criminal investigation into how hundreds of documents with classified markings ended up at his Mar-a-Lago club in Palm Beach, Florida, and state and federal officials are probing his efforts to overturn his 2020 election loss to Democrat Joe Biden. And in New York, Attorney General Letitia James filed a lawsuit this week claiming Trump's namesake company engaged in decades of fraudulent bookkeeping, padding his net worth by billions of dollars and habitually misleading banks.



Former President Donald Trump speaks at a rally in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., Sept. 3, 2022.

Associated Press

News of the new super PAC also comes less than two months before the Nov. 8 midterm elections and as many Republican candidates have been struggling to raise money against well-funded Democrats. "President Trump is committed to saving America, and Make America Great Again, Inc. will ensure that is achieved at the ballot box in November and beyond," said Trump spokesman Taylor Budowich, who will serve as the group's executive director. Others joining the committee include Republican strategist Chris LaCivita,

longtime Trump pollster Tony Fabrizio and communications aides Steven Cheung and Alex Pfeiffer. Until now, Trump's Save America leadership PAC, which must abide by far stricter fundraising and spending limits and has come under its own scrutiny, has served as his chief political vehicle. Super PACs can raise unlimited money and spend it freely but are barred from coordinating directly with campaigns. Trump officials declined to say how much the notoriously thrifty former president intends to spend on his midterm ef-

orts or how much he might try to transfer from his Save America PAC, which ended August with more than \$90 million. The Associated Press previously reported that aides had been discussing the possibility of moving at least some of that money to a new or repurposed super PAC, though campaign finance experts are mixed on the legality of such a move. While Trump has been a prolific fundraiser since leaving office, vacuuming up small-dollar donations, his existing super PAC Make America Great Again, Again! has not been a ma-

yor midterm player.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, in particular, has urged candidates with Trump's support to ask him to open his wallet. In the meantime, candidates, including some who presented themselves as McConnell antagonists during their primaries, have had to grovel to him and the Senate Leadership Fund, the super PAC he controls, which had \$100 million in reserve at the end of June. Trump played a highly visible role during the GOP primaries, endorsing hundreds of candidates up and down the ballot, from Senate to governor to county commissioner.

But some of those contenders are now struggling in their general election races, putting control of the evenly divided Senate up in the air.

Trump is widely expected to launch another presidential run, but the timing of an announcement remains unclear. While he had once been keen to announce before the midterm elections, in part to try to stave off a long list of potential rivals who have been circling, some aides have urged him to wait, warning that announcing early could leave him open to blame if Republicans perform poorly in November. □

Pentagon lays out new food, housing programs for troops

By LOLITA C. BALDOR

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Pentagon announced a number of new programs Thursday that are aimed at helping service members who are struggling with housing shortages and steep food and living expenses as they move from base to base.

Gil Cisneros, undersecretary for personnel, told reporters that Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin ordered the moves, which also include programs to expand child care and make it easier for spouses to find work. The new programs, he said,

will help "ensure we continue to offer a competi-

tive suite of benefits that makes DOD the employer

of choice for those who so selflessly serve."

With growing competition from corporations seeking to hire young people in the tight job market, the military services are struggling to meet their recruiting goals. A key problem in the past year or two has been housing. Service members transferring to new duty stations have complained about difficulties finding rentals, particularly ones they can afford as escalating housing costs surpass their military allowance. In response, Austin ordered increases in the basic housing allowance in 28 areas

where rent has spiked more than 20% above current allowances.

Austin also directed a permanent increase in temporary lodging expenses for service members moving into areas where there are housing shortages. Troops will now get 14 days rather than the previous 10 in temporary living costs for moves within the U.S., and up to 60 days in areas where there are housing shortages. Both of the housing changes take effect next month.

Austin also ordered price cuts at base commissaries. □



Pentagon spokesman U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Patrick Ryder speaks during a media briefing at the Pentagon, Thursday, Sept. 22, 2022, in Washington.

Associated Press

As shelters fill, NYC weighs tents to house migrants

By **BOBBY CAINA CALVAN**

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — New York City's mayor says he plans to erect hangar-sized tents as temporary shelter for thousands of international migrants who have been bused into the Big Apple as part of a campaign by Republican governors to disrupt federal border policies. The tents are among an array of options from using cruise ships to summer camps the city is considering as it struggles to find housing for an estimated 13,000 migrants who have wound up in New York after being bused north from border towns in Texas and Arizona.

"This is not an everyday homelessness crisis, but a humanitarian crisis that requires a different approach," New York Mayor Eric Adams said in a statement Thursday.

New York City's huge system of homeless shelters has been straining to accommodate the unexpected new flow of migrants seeking asylum in the United States.

In Arizona and Texas, officials have loading people on buses for free trips to Washington and New York City. More recently, Florida, which has a Republican



Dylan Jimenez reads text messages as he stands outside a shelter, after arriving on a chartered bus from Texas earlier in the day, Aug. 10, 2020, in New York.

Associated Press

governor running for re-election, flew migrants at public cost to Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts. Adams said the city had opened 23 emergency shelters and was considering 38 more to handle the people bused into the city since May. The city also recently opened a new, multimillion dollar intake center to help the newcomers quickly get settled.

The first tent has been proposed for a remote corner of the Bronx, a parking lot

at a popular city beach on Long Island Sound where public transportation is limited. Officials are looking into other areas.

A rendering of the likely design of the facility, released by the city, showed rows and rows of cots. Presumably, the tent would be heated, as autumn nights in the city can be quite cool, but the city released few details.

City officials said these facilities which they call "humanitarian emergency

response and relief centers would only house migrants for up to four days while the city arranged other types of shelter.

Advocates for the homeless were unsure how to react. "We just don't have enough detail to about what their plan is to form an opinion," said Josh Goldfein, a staff attorney with the Legal Aid Society. "If the goal here is to sort of quickly assess what people need and get them connected to services that will

help them then that will be great." But he said the proposal has yet to be fleshed out. "All we know, is a location, and a picture of a big tent," he said. "We don't know what's going to be in it or who."

In a joint statement, the Legal Aid Society and the Coalition for the Homeless said it was working with city officials to come up with "a viable solution that satisfies New York's legal and moral obligation to provide safe and adequate shelter to all who seek it, including asylum seekers."

Earlier this month, Adams had floated the idea of housing hundreds of migrants on cruise ships.

Critics pounced on that idea, saying he needs to offer more lasting solutions to a problem that has long vexed the city: How to find permanent shelter for the city's unhoused not just new migrants but for the considerable population of the homeless. Overall, the number of people staying nightly in New York City's homeless shelters had fallen in recent years, partly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. That led city officials to reduce shelter capacity, leaving the system unprepared for the sudden surge in people needing help. □

Maryland announces settlement with Kushner-owned company

By **BRIAN WITTE**

Associated Press

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (AP) — A property management company owned by the family of former President Donald Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, has agreed to pay a \$3.25 million civil penalty and restitution to settle a 2019 lawsuit in Maryland over allegations of charging tenants illegal fees and failing to maintain properties, Attorney General Brian Frosh announced Friday. Frosh announced that his office's Consumer Protection Division has reached a settlement with Westminster Management, LLC, a New Jersey-based corporation, and the 25 companies that own or owned 17 residential com-

munities managed by Westminster Management in Maryland.

The settlement addresses charges that Westminster and the property owners violated the Consumer Protection Act.

The attorney general said in a news release that the properties in question contained more than 9,000 rental units across Baltimore City, Baltimore County and Prince George's County. The settlement will potentially pay restitution to thousands of current and former residents of the communities, the attorney general's office said.

The settlement, contained in a final order entered by the Consumer Protection Division, requires Westmin-

ster to return to consumers excessive application fees; improper agent fees, writ fees, and court costs charged in summary ejectment actions; small credit balances that were improperly retained by the company; and security deposit interest that was not paid to vacating tenants. Frosh, a Democrat, said. "Management hid these conditions only to reveal them to their tenants after they were locked into long-term leases. Westminster knew the condition of its properties, and it charged tenants illegal fees to live in those miserable conditions. Westminster's conduct was unconscionable."

Westminster is not admitting wrongdoing under the

settlement.

"Westminster is pleased to have settled this litigation with no admission of liability or wrongdoing," Peter Febo, Kushner Cos.' chief

operating officer, said in a statement. "We look forward to moving past this matter so that we can focus on our ever-expanding real estate portfolio." □



In this July 29, 2019, photo, a sign sits outside the Dutch Village apartments and townhomes, owned by the Kushner Cos., in Baltimore.

Associated Press

Post-Fiona fuel disruptions spark fear in Puerto Rico

By **DÁNICA COTO**

Associated Press

CAGUAS, Puerto Rico (AP)

— A growing number of businesses, including grocery stores and gas stations, are temporarily closing across Puerto Rico as power outages caused by Hurricane Fiona drag on in the U.S. territory, sparking concern about the availability of fuel and basic goods.

Hand-written signs warning of closures have been popping up more frequently, eliciting sighs and groans from customers on an island where nearly 60% of 1.47 million clients still do not have power five days after the storm hit.

Betty Merced, a retiree who lives in the southern coastal city of Salinas, said she has spent several days looking for diesel to fill up her generator to no avail. She uses a sleep apnea machine and cannot risk going without it.

"There are a lot of people with a lot of needs," she said. "If there is no diesel, we're going to be very much in harm's way."

Merced said she would travel to the nearby town of Santa Isabel on Friday, and if she doesn't find diesel there, she will drive more



Nancy Galarza looks at the damage that Hurricane Fiona inflicted on her community, which remained cut off four days after the Category 1 storm slammed the rural community of San Salvador in the town of Caguas, Puerto Rico, Thursday, Sept. 22, 2022.

Associated Press

than an hour to the northern city of Caguas, where at least one convenience store had a "No gas" sign on its door Thursday evening. "I didn't think we were going to be so many days without power," she said. Gasoline also was unavailable in Salinas after all gas stations shut down Wednesday, said community leader Wanda Ríos Colorado.

"When I saw that, my stom-

ach almost turned," she said, adding that it gave her flashbacks of Hurricane Maria, a Category 4 storm that hit Puerto Rico in September 2017, resulting in nearly 3,000 deaths and sparking severe shortages of fuel, food, water and cash.

People also have struggled to get their prescriptions as some pharmacies temporarily close.

Puerto Rico's Department of Consumer Affairs said there is no shortage of fuel, but rather a disruption to the system as a result of flooding, landslides and an island-wide power outage caused by Fiona when it slammed into Puerto Rico's southwestern corner Sunday as a Category 1 storm. Some fuel stations were unable to reopen or could not be refilled in the storm's

early aftermath, officials said.

Consumer Affairs Secretary Edan Rivera sought to temper concerns, saying that "there is no basis to talk about a fuel shortage in Puerto Rico." He added that his agency also has found sufficient supplies of basic goods.

On Friday, Gov. Pedro Pierluisi of Puerto Rico activated the National Guard to help distribute diesel fuel to hospitals and supermarkets.

The force is also supplying generators used to operate potable water plants and telecommunications towers.

On Thursday evening, Rivera announced that crews finally restored power to a gasoline distribution terminal in the southeastern town of Yabucoa that had been operating at a third of its capacity because it was running on a generator.

Rivera said this would speed up distribution of fuel across the island because the terminal could now operate 24 hours a day until the island recovers from the storm. He said there is 14 days' worth of regular gasoline, 25 for diesel and 11 for premium. □

Taliban: Car bomb near Kabul mosque kills 7, wounds 41

By **EBRAHIM NOROOZI and RAHIM FAIEZ**

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)

— A car bomb went off Friday as worshippers were leav-

ing a Kabul mosque, killing at least seven people and wounding 41, including several children, a Taliban official said.

No one immediately

claimed responsibility for the bombing, the latest in a steady stream of attacks since the Taliban seized power in Afghanistan just over a year ago.

A column of black smoke rose into the sky and shots rang out several minutes after the explosion near the mosque, located in a high-profile diplomatic neighborhood of the Afghan capital.

A Taliban-appointed Interior Ministry spokesman, Abdul Nafi Takor, said the vehicle with explosives was parked by the roadside near the mosque and detonated as worshippers were coming out after Friday prayers. He added that an investigation was underway, with police at

the site.

"Many people were martyred or wounded," said Mohammad Basir, an eyewitness. "I don't know if there were explosives placed on the roadside or if it was a car bomb, but there was an explosion, and all the people were in a bad situation."

Another eyewitness, Allah Noor, said the blast was very strong.

"I came out and had crossed the street when an explosion happened," he said. "Right after the explosion, people nervously started evacuating wounded victims to hospital."

The Italian Emergency Hospital, one of Kabul's clinics that treated the victims, said it received 14 casual-

ties from the site, with four dead on arrival.

Khalid Zadran, a spokesman for the Kabul police chief, said worshippers were intentionally targeted as they were leaving the Wazir Akbar Khan Mosque. "Targeting mosques and worshippers is an unforgivable crime, the nation should cooperate with the regime in eliminating criminals," said Taliban government spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid.

The Islamic State group a top rival of the Taliban since their takeover in Afghanistan just over a year ago has previously targeted mosques and worshippers, and especially members of Afghanistan's minority Shiites in attacks. □



Afghan people clean a car that was damaged by an explosion, in Kabul, Afghanistan, Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2022.

Associated Press

Syrian official says so far, 77 dead in migrant boat sinking

By **FAY ABUELGASIM** and **BILAL HUSSEIN**

Associated Press

ARIDA BORDER CROSSING, Lebanon (AP) — At least 77 people were killed when a boat carrying migrants sank off Syria this week, the country's health minister said Friday, amid fears the death toll could be far higher.

The incident was deadliest so far as a surging number of Lebanese, Syrians, and Palestinians have been trying to flee crisis-hit Lebanon by sea for a better future in Europe. Tens of thousands have lost their jobs while the Lebanese pound has dropped more than 90% in value, eradicating the purchasing power of thousands of families that now live in extreme poverty.

Syrian authorities said victims' relatives have started crossing from Lebanon into Syria to help identify their loved ones and retrieve their bodies. The vessel left Lebanon on Tuesday and news of what happened first started to emerge on Thursday afternoon. The boat was carrying Syrian, Lebanese and Palestinians. Syrian state-run TV quoted Health Minister Mohammed Hassan Ghabbash as saying 20 people were rescued and were being treated



Palestinian rescue team stand on a Lebanese shore, as they wait to receive from the Syrian Red Crescent several victims of those who were on a boat carrying migrants from Lebanon that sank in Syrian waters, at Arida border crossing point between Lebanon and Syria, north Lebanon, Sept. 23, 2022.

ed at al-Basel hospital in Syria's coastal city of Tartus. He added that medical authorities have been on alert since Thursday afternoon to help in the search operations. An official at al-Basel, speaking on condition of anonymity under regulations, told The Associated Press that eight of those rescued were in intensive care. The official also confirmed the 77 deaths. There were conflicting reports on

how many people were on board the vessel when it sank, with some saying at least 120. Details about the ship, such as its size and capacity, were also not clear. Lebanese Transport Minister Ali Hamie said the survivors included 12 Syrians, five Lebanese and three Palestinians.

Eight bodies have been brought back to Lebanon early Friday, according to Lebanese Interior Minister

Bassam Mawlawi.

After sunset Friday, bodies of more victims, including two Palestinians, were brought to Lebanon. They were taken in seven ambulances and headed south from the Arida border crossing toward the northern city of Tripoli.

Earlier in the day, Tartus governor Abdul-Halim Khalil told the pro-government Sham FM Radio that the search was underway for

more bodies off his country's coast. Khalil said the boat sank on Wednesday. Syria's state news agency, SANA, quoted a port official as saying that 31 bodies were washed ashore while the rest were picked up by Syrian boats in a search operation that started Thursday evening.

Wissam Tellawi, one of the survivors being treated at al-Basel, lost two daughters. His wife and two sons are still missing. The bodies of his daughters, Mae and Maya, were brought to Lebanon early Friday and buried in their northern hometown of Qarqaf.

"He told me by telephone, 'I am fine' but the children are lost," said Tellawi's father, who identified himself as Abu Mahmoud. The father told the local Al-Jadeed TV that his son gave smugglers the family's apartment in return for taking him and his family to Europe. In the aftermath of the disaster, the Lebanese army said troops stormed Friday the homes of several suspected smugglers, detaining four in the northern city of Tripoli, Lebanon's second-largest and most impoverished. Three others were detained in the nearby village of Deir Ammar. □

Associated Press

Denmark to allow 'significantly reduced' mink production

By **JAN M. OLSEN**

Associated Press

COPENHAGEN, Denmark

(AP) — Denmark's government said Friday that a temporary ban on mink breeding will expire Jan. 1, allowing mink production to resume in the country but at a "significantly reduced" level than before the coronavirus pandemic. The government nearly two years ago ordered a cull of millions of minks and banned their farming to minimize the risk of the small mammals retransmitting the virus to contain a mutated version that could spread to people.

At first the ban was set to expire at the end of 2021 but

was extended for a year. As of Jan. 1, it will again be permitted to keep mink in Denmark. It was not immediately clear whether

there would be a cap on the number of animals per farm. There will be limits on the number of people allowed to visit farms, and



Mink look out from a pen at a breeding farm near Naestved, Denmark, Friday Nov. 6, 2020.

Associated Press

farmers will be required to register the names of visitors. The Environment and Food Ministry said health officials now think "there is a limited risk to public health by resuming significantly reduced mink production and by introducing infection prevention measures." The government said the decision to lift the temporary ban was based on an assessment by the Statens Serum Institut, a government agency that maps the spread of diseases in Denmark. Food, Agriculture and Fisheries Minister Rasmus Prehn and institute officials plan to meet later Friday with representatives of the Danish mink industry to

"review the infection prevention measures for the industry." The government said veterinary and health authorities have drawn up a model with requirements for handling COVID-19 in mink herds that breeders must "implement and comply with in order to be able to keep mink again after the turn of the year."

"There are absolutely no good reasons to reopen large mink farms with millions of animals crammed in small wire cages until they are killed for their fur," said Britta Riis, head of Animal Protection Denmark. "It is bad for the animals, the environment and the climate." □

The Netherlands encouraging less use of airplanes ATA monitoring development closely

ORANJESTAD – It is about 20 Euros more expensive for travelers starting their vacation at Schiphol. This means that instead of the 8 Euros that they began paying in January 2021, starting January 2023 they will pay 26.43 Euro. The increase in the 'vliegtaks' is part of the governance agreement of the Dutch coalition. The income will partially be invested in making airplanes more sustainable and reducing the effects on residential areas.

According to the Dutch government, the tax increase is to make a difference between a plane ticket and the smallest train. The increase in 'vliegtaks' will produce an additional 400 million Euros in tax in-

come on top of the 200 million that began coming in since 2021.

Aside from the intention to make travelling by plane less attractive, the government expects in this way that the tax will contribute to cover the costs for society.

Climate activists argue that the impact of plane travel on climate change is very big and the goal needs to be making vacation more sustainable. For the Netherlands, this means that the traveller is stimulated to choose train or bus. In comparison, Germany charges 13 Euros for flights within Europe and 59 Euros for inter-continental flights.

Aruba

Bon Dia Aruba contacted the director of Aruba Tourism Authority, Ronella Croes regarding this development and to see if they are prepared for this increase. "We cannot necessarily prepare for this. What I can say is that there is a projection for the Netherlands for 2023", Croes explained. The projection illustrates that Aruba can receive more than 46 thousand visitors from the Netherlands in 2023. "From Europe we have an increase of five percent for 2023 compared to 2022."

On the other hand, the team of ATA is very aware of the increase in costs for travelers and the possible impact for Aruba. "We are



monitoring the cost of a vacation to Aruba closely. The fact is that there is an increase in various aspects for various markets and we need to take into consideration the increase in local costs as well. If there is a negative impact on tourism, we trust that the accommodations and airlines among other will also adjust their prices." In other

words, ATA hopes that the other partners will reduce their prices in order to continue doing business.

"Until now, the projections indicate that the volume of visitors for Aruba will see an increase next year, and same applies to the direct income from tourism (tourism receipts) for Aruba in 2023", Ronella Croes, director of ATA, commented. □

Prime minister Wever-Croes met with Hillary Clinton "Finding solutions for Aruba"



ORANJESTAD – Prime minister of Aruba, Evelyn Wever-Croes met with Mrs. Hillary

Clinton to explore how the Clinton Foundation can help Aruba regarding inno-

vation projects.

This meeting took place this week during the conference "Clinton Global Initiative - Taking Action Together 2022". Prime minister Wever-Croes is currently in New York attending the General Assembly of the United Nations (UNGA).

During the conference of the Clinton Global Initiative this year, ex-president of the US, Bill Clinton, together with Hillary Clinton and their daughter Chelsea Clinton discussed various topics of interest. President of the World Health Organization (WHO), Tedros Ghebreyesus and artist/activist Bono



elaborated on the effects of the pandemic and the strategy that was used in developed and underdeveloped countries. Their advice is now to invest in a basic healthcare system.

Prime minister Wever-Croes said that it was a good meeting, adding that she is "finding solutions for Aruba". □

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How it all began

It was 1938 when Mr. Eric Ponson started his journey at General Store. Ponson did not hesitate and decided to buy General Store. Buying a store and thus going from employee to owner of a business with a debt of 11.000 guilders was not an easy task.

As the saying goes: "Behind every successful man, is a strong woman". In the case of Ponson, this was no different. As General Store progressed and slowly became successful, Mrs. Irene Ponson, came in to assist her husband. Irene Ponson is a visionary, she knew exactly where and how to invest and within a short amount of time in 1970, General Store moved to a better location at the Steenweg. This allowed for a lot more merchandise, products and employees. Supply and demand was as such, that General Store became the number 1 electrical business. Business kept going so well that the location at the Steenweg became too small and was moved later to Dakota Shopping Paradise and later to Pedro Gallego Straat. With this move, an expansion was decided upon and an electronics store in Savaneta was opened. General Store still being very successful was ready for more growth.



Ricky, Kenneth, Corine and Frans are the fruits of this marriage. Kenneth and Frans however, decided to further develop their father's legacy and continued with their mother's dream to expand the business. An expansion not in square feet only, but in merchandise as well. A great opportunity presented itself when the Ponson family was able to buy a piece of property across from the airport. In 2007 the Ponson family moved into their brand new and huge building. Ponson's General Store now had an electrical department, as housewares department, a paint department and a hardware department.

After a successful opening and expansion, Kenneth and Frans who inherited their mother's vision, decided that General Store was ready for yet another expansion. With the support of Mr. Tom Barfell and management of Do it Best in the States, the construction of Do it Center commenced. Fast forward to today. A Do it Center in Aruba, with more than 50.000 top of the line items for interior as well exterior use, building materials, STO products and a top of the line grocery store. Perseverance, responsibility, vision and the courage to invest have made Ponson's General Store as successful as it is today.

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Honoring of loyal visitors at Divi Dutch Village Beach Resort



EAGLE BEACH - Recently, Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure in honoring many loyal Aruba visitors with their distinctive certificates. These certificates are a way to say "Masha Danki" for continuously choosing Aruba as a favorite vacation destination. The titles are as fol-

lowing: 10+ years "Distinguished Visitor", 20+ years "Goodwill Ambassador" and 36+ years "Emerald Ambassador".

The honorees were **Gerald and Pauline Tarr**, residents of Delaware, United States who were honored as emerald Ambassadors of Aru-



ba. This symbolic honorary title is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba between the 10-20-35 and more consecutive year mark.

These loyal visitors love to come to the island for its

friendly people, the wonderful warm weather, the ocean clear water, the delicious food and the feeling of arriving home in Aruba.

Ms. Olga Ruiz representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and members of the Divi Dutch Village Beach Resort bestowed the certifi-

cation of the Ambassadors and presented the Ambassadors with gifts, and thanked them on behalf of the Government of Aruba for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination for so many years. Mr. and Mrs. Tarr can now call Aruba their home away from home. □

Honoring of loyal visitors at Marriott's Aruba Ocean Club

EAGLE BEACH - Recently, Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure in honoring many loyal Aruba visitors with their distinctive certificates. These cer-

tificates are a way to say "Masha Danki" for continuously choosing Aruba as a favorite vacation destination. The titles are as following: 10+ years "Distin-

guished Visitor", 20+ years "Goodwill Ambassador" and 36+ years "Emerald Ambassador".

The honorees were **Frank Grady and Pamela Stanzio-la**, residents of New Jersey, United States who were honored as Goodwill Ambassadors of Aruba.

This symbolic honorary title is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba between the 10-20-35 and more consecutive year

mark.

These loyal visitors love returning to Aruba for the genuine and special people, the hospitality of everyone on the island, the great weather, the effort that Marriott makes to make very guest feel special and the safety of the island.

Ms. Olga Ruiz representing the Aruba Tourism Author-

ity, and members of the Marriott's Aruba Ocean Club bestowed the certification of the Ambassadors and presented the Ambassadors with gifts, and thanked them on behalf of the Government of Aruba for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination for so many years. The Honorees can now call Aruba their home away from home. □





Palm Beach, Aruba - Rabbi Ahron Blasberg, of Chabad of Aruba, knows that to engage members of the tribe one often needs to lower the barriers of entry, sometimes beyond the institutional walls of the synagogue.

To accommodate those who would otherwise not participate in formal Rosh Hashanah synagogue services, the rabbi is promoting a brief, open to all, thirty-minute Rosh Hashanah ceremony that includes the primary observances of the holiday.

Behold, the "Community Tashlich & Shofar Service" will take place on Monday September 26th 5:30pm at the beach front between Marriott Hotel and Ritz Carlton (in front of Vela Sports Center).

Tashlich is a practice rich in symbolic and mystical meaning, which is customarily performed on the first day of Rosh Hashanah. A brief prayer is recited near a body of water, preferably con-

Chabad Jewish Center of Aruba offers 30 MINUTE, COMMUNITY ROSH HASHANAH SERVICE

taining live fish; in which we express our prayerful hope that G d cast our indiscretions into the depths of the sea, and that we be granted a good and sweet new year filled with G d's abundant and manifest blessings.

The sounding of the shofar is the central mitzvah of Rosh Hashana. Typically, it is part of the Rosh Hashanah synagogue services. However, if for any reason one did not attend services, the shofar sounding can be fulfilled throughout the day of Rosh Hashana. The mitzvah of shofar also contains many deep and inspiring messages for us to reflect upon.

"According to Jewish tradition the gates of heaven are open on the New Year, and G d accepts prayers from everyone," said Rabbi Ahron Blasberg, "That served as our inspiration to create Rosh Hashanah opportunities for everyone in the community."

"The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi M. Schneerson, of righteous memory, insisted that Judaism be made accessible to all Jews" Rabbi Ahron Blasberg explained. "During the High Holiday period, accessibility can mean different things to different people. For some it means shorter, more user-friendly services, for others it means a non-judgmental atmosphere, while for still others accessibility means affordability, and no ex-

pectation of membership or affiliation. Our goal is to lower the barriers of entry, and to encourage each and every Jewish person to actively participate in the observances of Rosh Hashana".

Rosh Hashanah begins this year at sundown on Sunday, September 25, and extends until nightfall on Tuesday, September 27th.

For more information about this ceremony and all the traditional, accessible services over the High Holidays please contact Chabad Jewish Center of Aruba at 5927613 email Rabbi@Jewisharuba.com or visit www.Jewisharuba.com/highholidays

#

Event Recap:

Who: Open to one open to all!

What: Tashlich and Shofar service on the Beach

Where: Beachfront between Marriott & Ritz Carlton (Front of Vela Sport Center).

When: September 26th 5:30pm

Chabad also offers free Rosh Hashanah services

What: Free Rosh Hashanah Services

Where: Chabad Jewish Center of Aruba

When: September 25th-27th

Free RSVP: 5927613 Rabbi@Jewisharuba.com

www.Jewisharuba.com/highholidays □

Another Treasure of Aruba's Beaches: Sea Glass!



NOORD - It is hard to imagine this happening today, but years ago people dumped all kinds of refuse straight into the ocean, including old cars, and their household garbage, which of course included lots of glass. Over the next 30 years the pounding waves cleaned the beach, by breaking down everything but glass and pottery.

The pounding waves washed the trash up and down, back and forth. Tons of polished, broken glass pieces were created by the pounding surf. These smoothened, colored glass particles then settled along the sea shore in millions, and that is why you can find these beautiful and colorful pieces on the north shore beaches of Aruba.

Especially on the strip on white sand between the famous Natural Bridge" and

the huge red anchor close to "Grapefield" beach you will be able to find your own pieces of sea glass. The sea glass that was created is the product of a very long and interesting process. It can take anywhere from 10 to 30 years to make sea glass.

The name for any piece of glass that finds its way to the ocean and tumbles around in the water long enough is "Sea glass.

The colorful pieces of glass are being used for decoration, handcrafts and jewelry!

Once glass makes its way into the ocean, the glass is broken up into shards and is tumbled around in the water, where sand and other rocks act like sandpaper to smooth out its rough edges. Sometimes as the sea glass is passed through fire, it be-

comes fire glass, the rarest of sea glass with certain inclusions, just like precious gems.

For years, the water beat against the different kinds of trash being dumped. Glass, household appliances and even motor parts were discarded on the beach. The waves and weather conditions wore down the overwhelming amount of garbage in the water, creating millions of beautiful smooth rocks.

It's hard to believe the short-sighted mistakes we were making that could

have potentially ruined these beautiful beaches. But thanks to natural processes, the ocean transformed the trash into the sea glass.

Each colored gem on the beach has its own story.

The ruby red glass stones are typically from old car tail-lights.

Then, the sapphire rocks are the remnants of broken apothecary bottles. The most common and the easiest to find are the brown (Amstel & Polar beer), green (Heineken & Balashi beer) and clear

glass which are the soft much loved "soft drink" bottles.

If you like to see the sea glass for yourself, and be in awe of the power of nature, rent a car or jeep and go explore our deserted beaches on the north side of the island. Make it a fun family day!

Even if we didn't mean to pollute the Beaches how we did, it is inspiring to see just how the earth can correct our mistakes.

Funny, how trash can change into treasures!

Everybody knows that you are not allowed to take local shells home, but the people working at the airport have no problem you taking sea glass home. A few of those pieces make great souvenirs. You can place them in a wine glass or large bottle for decoration and every time you look at it a smile will light up your face thinking back of your unforgettable Aruba vacation! □



During conference Platform for Women Leaders, Prime Minister elaborated on how Aruba is preparing female leaders for the future



During the General Assembly of the United Nations that is taking place in New York, prime minister of Aruba, Evelyn Wever-Croes attended the conference of Women Leaders. During this meeting, the prime minister explained how as a woman she led Aruba during the pandemic together with other female professionals, and elaborated on

the importance of ensuring that other women are being prepared for leadership positions.

On this occasion, thoughts and concerns were exchanged with other women leaders from other countries.

Aruba is currently in the process of recovery and

bouncing back after experiencing various crisis situations. Prime minister Wever-Croes commented that just like her, different women present at the conference were also leading during difficult times. In this context the impact of women leaders worldwide is recognized. The prime minister explained that it is important to think about how as a country we are preparing other women to 'climb the ladder' also in the future and exchange ideas to not leave this to chance.

Currently the focus in Aruba is on the field of education. It is known that children who are now in primary school, in the future will work in positions that do not exist yet. So it is important to consider how we are preparing them for the future, and if this is enough.



"We know that science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) is a very important area of education for children", Wever-Croes said. Considering this, there are various initiatives that have taken place with projects to motivate girls in this area. A project mentioned by the prime minister that took place is Supernova, where

girls who participated received experience in the field of STEM and necessary information to be successful in this area.

Prime minister Wever-Croes finalized by saying it was an honor to exchange thoughts and ideas on this important subject together with female prime ministers from other countries. □

Sustainability in common: Aruba also observed United Nations SDG Flag Day

ORANJESTAD – Between 19 and 26 of September, countries around the world are observing the United Nations SDG week. During this time, we reflect on the sustainable development goals the world aspires to reach.

Yesterday, Friday 23 of September the United Nations SDG Flag Raising Day was observed, for which around the world, the SDG flag was raised. It is a day of world unity when it was proved that sustainable development is more than

a dream, it is a concrete execution plan to leave a better country and a better world behind for the next generations.

Minister Geoffrey Wever, as a minister of Sustainable Development gave a short speech in which he highlighted the commitment of Aruba to achieve the common sustainability goals.

Recently Aruba had the opportunity to present at the Voluntary National Review of the United Nations the advances that Aruba is making to implement SDGs, which is extremely positive.



"As minister of Sustainable Development, I firmly believe that each country must organize itself to achieve the ambitious SDGs, and that out-of-the-

box thinking, innovation and partnerships are crucial in this process", minister Wever said during his closing remarks. □



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 37 Move smoothly
 - 39 Showed over
 - 5 Historic event
 - 40 Quite full
 - 41 Flight
 - 12 "Skyfall" singer
 - 42 Prudent

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Yesterday's answer

- DOWN**
- 1 Aspirations
 - 2 Tooth layer
 - 3 Sight from Yemen
 - 4 Mer makeup
 - 5 Stadium group
 - 6 Swearing-in vow
 - 7 Scorching
 - 8 Tabloid content
 - 9 Peevish
 - 11 Blue-gray cat
 - 17 Depict
 - 20 Country division
 - 21 Rock unit
 - 23 Angled golf holes
 - 25 Spot for a ten-spot
 - 26 Look up to
 - 27 Where Gauguin painted
 - 28 Undermines
 - 29 Mocks
 - 31 Nobel, for one
 - 33 Bears' lairs
 - 36 Call on
 - 38 Bar study

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9-24

AXYDLBAAXR
IS LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's. X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

9-24

CRYPTOQUOTE

UI GYFSN LH NONK FH TFR

FH QCNJ QNY Y JIM LQH BILUB

QI TN. — SCMSZ QCI VGH IU

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: ALL THINGS SHARE THE SAME BREATH ... THE AIR SHARES ITS SPIRIT WITH ALL THE LIFE IT SUPPORTS. — CHIEF SEATTLE

Airbnb hosts are sick of Airbnb, too

By SAM KEMMIS of Nerd-Wallet

Disgruntled Airbnb guests are taking to Twitter and TikTok to vent about everything from cleaning fees to misleading listings. But they aren't the only ones with complaints: Airbnb hosts themselves have become increasingly disillusioned with the platform and its disrespectful guests.

On message boards and Facebook groups, hosts are sharing their own challenges and horror stories. One host claimed that a group of guests was unwilling to leave the property despite receiving a full refund from Airbnb.

"I went to the apartment to check what was going on, and I was in shock to discover that the tenants were still in the apartment," the host wrote on the website AirbnbHell. "They immediately called the police on me and I was kicked out of my own apartment by a team of the police a complete shock."

While these anecdotes might seem like the natural byproduct of the largely unregulated short-term rental industry, they speak to larger trends impacting hosts. A 2021 report from Bloomberg detailed how Airbnb's secretive crisis team spends millions of dollars to limit the publicity of crimes and other incidents at its listings potentially damaging to the company's reputation. And the platform recently launched "anti-party technology" in an effort to defray hosts' frustrations with large, destructive gatherings.

These issues raise the question: Is Airbnb itself the problem or are the guests?

SILLY STRING AND FOUL ODORS

In May of this year, Airbnb launched a new "AirCover" protection plan for guests and hosts. It promises quick reimbursement for hosts and up to \$1 million in damage protection. And while many hosts consider this policy generous, it still comes with plenty of gray areas.

Emily Muskin Rathner, a



In this Thursday, Sept. 20, 2018 photo, a cleaning lady works in an apartment located on Airbnb in Paris.

Associated Press

digital marketing professional living in Cleveland, began renting her house on Airbnb in August 2021. She says that hosting has been a pleasant and profitable enterprise overall, but a few guests have caused major problems, including a family that rented the house this June.

"They left the house a mess," she says. "There was human feces on our laundry. They sprayed Silly String all over the place. I don't care about Silly String, but can you pick it up? It left stains, oddly."

Muskin Rathner received reimbursement from Airbnb for most of her claims. But some damage, such as nail polish smeared on the bathroom tile, didn't qualify for reimbursement because she wasn't able to provide documentation for the cost of the tile. And then there was the smell.

"It really, really stunk. The air conditioning had been left off for a week in June."

RED TAPE EVERYWHERE

The early days of short-term vacation rentals offered hosts a simple proposition: Rent your home and earn some extra money. Yet as the industry has matured, it's been met with regulation efforts from local governments.

Cities such as Denver and Portland, Oregon, have been cracking down on unlicensed short-term rentals, levying fines against hosts and requiring expensive permits.

These policies allow local governments to collect

taxes and regulate problematic behavior, but they add one more layer of complexity for hosts, many of whom have little experience in hospitality.

Furthermore, many local governments place the burden of tax collection on hosts, not Airbnb. A 2022 analysis by the National League of Cities, an advocacy organization composed of city, town and village leaders, estimated that 82% of cities require hosts to remit taxes themselves, while only 5% require the platform to do so on hosts' behalf.

Hosts must now not only act as full-time customer service agents and hospitality experts, but also navigate local regulations and master convoluted taxation laws.

COMPETITION FROM MANAGEMENT COMPANIES

The romantic notion of home sharing as a means for homeowners to pay their mortgages has given way to management companies inserting themselves and aiming to maximize profits. And small-time hosts can't keep up with these corporate competitors.

A study of short-term rentals in the U.K. found that the number of listings managed by hosts with a single property dropped from 69% in 2015 to 39% in 2019. And data from the nonprofit Inside Airbnb suggests that only 39.1% of properties in Los Angeles are managed by single-property hosts.

These mega-hosts are able to operate at scale, □

Tonga volcano blast was unusual, could even warm the Earth

By MADDIE BURAKOFF
AP Science Writer
NEW YORK (AP) — When an undersea volcano erupted in Tonga in January, its watery blast was huge and unusual and scientists are still trying to understand its impacts.

The volcano, known as Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai, shot millions of tons of water vapor high up into the atmosphere, according to a study published Thursday in the journal *Science*.

The researchers estimate the eruption raised the amount of water in the stratosphere the second layer of the atmosphere, above the range where humans live and breathe by around 5%.

Now, scientists are trying to figure out how all that water could affect the atmosphere, and whether it might warm Earth's surface over the next few years.

"This was a once-in-a-lifetime event," said lead author Holger Voemel, a scientist at the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Colorado.

Big eruptions usually cool the planet. Most volcanoes send up large amounts of sulfur, which blocks the sun's rays, explained Matthew Toohey, a climate researcher at the University of Saskatchewan who was not involved in the study.

The Tongan blast was much soggier: The eruption started under the ocean, so it shot up a plume with much more water than usual.

And since water vapor acts as a heat-trapping greenhouse gas, the eruption will probably raise temperatures instead of lowering them, Toohey said.

It's unclear just how much warming could be in store. Karen Rosenlof, a climate scientist at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration who was not involved with the study, said she expects the effects to be minimal and temporary.

"This amount of increase might warm the surface a



In this photo provided by New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai volcano erupts near Tonga in the South Pacific Ocean on Jan. 14, 2015.

Associated Press

small amount for a short amount of time," Rosenlof said in an email.

The water vapor will stick around the upper atmosphere for a few years before making its way into the lower atmosphere, Toohey said. In the meantime, the extra water might also speed up ozone loss in the atmosphere, Rosenlof added.

But it's hard for scientists to say for sure, because they've never seen an eruption like this one.

The stratosphere stretches from around 7.5 miles to 31 miles (12 km to 50 km)

above Earth and is usually very dry, Voemel explained.

Voemel's team estimated the volcano's plume using a network of instruments suspended from weather balloons.

Usually, these tools can't even measure water levels in the stratosphere because the amounts are so low, Voemel said.

Another research group monitored the blast using an instrument on a NASA satellite.

In their study, published earlier this summer, they estimated the eruption to

be even bigger, adding around 150 million metric tons of water vapor to the stratosphere — three times as much as Voemel's study found. □



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U.S. women use stellar defense to rout Puerto Rico 106-42

By **DOUG FEINBERG**
 AP Basketball Writer

SYDNEY (AP) — The United States is quickly identifying itself as a stellar defensive squad by using its athleticism to make it difficult for opponents to score.

Shakira Austin scored 19 points, Kahleah Copper added 16 and the U.S. played suffocating defense to rout Puerto Rico 106-42 on Friday in the women's World Cup.

"We talk every day about being hard to play against, getting deflections, and the team has really bought into that," U.S. coach Cheryl Reeve said.

The Americans (2-0) forced Puerto Rico into 21 turnovers and contested nearly every shot, making every point tough to come by.

"It's fun playing on a team that loves to play defense. It really fuels our offense," said Alyssa Thomas, who had six of the Americans' 13 steals.

The U.S. jumped out to a 27-11 lead after one quarter as Thomas had 10 points and five steals in the open-



United States' Ariel Atkins keeps the ball away from Puerto Rico's Arella Guirantes at the women's Basketball World Cup in Sydney, Australia, Friday, Sept. 23, 2022.

Associated Press

ing 10 minutes. The Americans forced nine turnovers in the period. The U.S. kept the pressure on in the second, holding Puerto Rico without a point for nearly the first five minutes of the period.

Mya Hollingshed finally ended the drought, mak-

ing a contested 3-pointer that made it 40-17. The Americans led 54-21 at the half. There was little drama in the second half as the U.S. kept extending its lead. The Americans contained guard Arella Guirantes, who had 26 points, nine rebounds and eight assists in

Puerto Rico's opening win over Bosnia and Herzegovina. She was held to seven points on 2-of-12 shooting. The U.S. threw four or five different defenders at her, starting with Copper.

"We like to be aggressive on both ends," Breanna Stewart said. "We can and

will guard multiple positions and make it hard for the other team. Our activity and awareness of one and another on the defensive end will go a long way in the tournament."

The U.S. now has won 24 consecutive World Cup games since losing in the 2006 semifinals to Russia. The Americans are two wins short of matching their record 26-game run from 1998-2006.

Puerto Rico (1-1) was coming off its first-ever World Cup win. Hollingshed, who played in college at Colorado, finished with 10 points. "The U.S. is the most important team in the tournament, but for us we are just trying to win one more game," Puerto Rico captain Pamela Rosado said.

REINFORCEMENTS

Chelsea Gray and Kelsey Plum landed in Sydney after celebrating the Las Vegas Aces' first WNBA championship with a parade on Tuesday.

They sat on the U.S. bench and cheered on their teammates. □

Marijuana stays on doping banned list; opiate tramadol added

By **GRAHAM DUNBAR**
 AP Sports Writer

GENEVA (AP) — Marijuana use will remain banned at sports events after the World Anti-Doping Agency on Friday resisted calls to change its status on the list of prohibited substances.

The agency was asked to review the status of THC the psychoactive ingredient in cannabis after the case of United States sprinter Sha'Carri Richardson, who did not go to the Tokyo Olympics last year. She served a one-month ban after testing positive at the national trials meet where she won the 100 meters. The sprinter said she had smoked marijuana as a way of coping with her mother's death.

In a separate decision, the opiate tramadol will now be banned when athletes are competing from January 2024, the WADA execu-

tive committee decided at a meeting in Sydney, Australia.

Athletes who use cannabis were consulted by WADA-appointed experts whose conclusions included that it was "against the spirit of sport," the agency said.

Positive tests for THC at races and events, though not in training, can therefore continue to trigger bans as short as one month.

The debate "is not straightforward," WADA director general Olivier Niggli acknowledged Friday.



United States sprinter Sha'Carri Richardson celebrates after winning the first heat of the semis finals in women's 100-meter run at the U.S. Olympic Track and Field Trials on June 19, 2021, in Eugene, Ore.

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"WADA is also mindful that the few requests for THC's removal from the Prohibited List are not supported by the experts' thorough review," he said. "We are also conscious that the laws of many countries as well as broad international regulatory laws and policies support maintaining cannabis on the List at this time."

WADA also noted the high threshold level to register a positive test for THC which is "consistent with a significantly impaired athlete or a frequent user."

Tramadol has been an issue in cycling which outlawed its use at races starting in 2019.

After the Tour de France in July, Nairo Quintana was disqualified from sixth place when two samples showed traces of the synthetic painkiller. He was not banned and is challeng-

ing his disqualification at the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

"Tramadol abuse, with its dose-dependent risks of physical dependence, opiate addiction and overdoses in the general population, is of concern and has led to it being a controlled drug in many countries," WADA said.

The in-competition ban will be enforced in January 2024 giving time to educate athletes and team doctors and "address the safe use of tramadol for clinical purposes," WADA said.

The International Cycling Union's medical rules state "commonly reported adverse side effects of tramadol are dizziness, drowsiness and loss of attention, which are incompatible with competitive cycling and endanger other competitors." □

'No lead is safe' more than a cliché this season

By **ROB MAADDI**

AP Pro Football Writer

"No lead is safe in the NFL" is more than a cliché this season.

Three teams overcame fourth-quarter deficits of at least 13 points to win last week for the first time in 30 years. The Arizona Cardinals and Miami Dolphins made history by rallying from 20-point halftime deficits to win on the same day for the first time.

Big comebacks and close finishes have become a trend. Already, 12 games were decided by three points or fewer, the most through the first two weeks. Eight teams have overcome a deficit of at least 10 points to win or tie.

"It's hard to blow a team out in our league," Buffalo Bills defensive coordinator Leslie Frazier said. "You have to go into it believing it's going to be a one-score game no matter what the halftime score is and sometimes (regardless of) what's going on in the third quarter. You have to be prepared to finish the game." The Bills have enjoyed lopsided victories over the Los Angeles Rams and Tennessee Titans because their offense stayed aggressive and the defense never let up. "When a team starts



Arizona Cardinals quarterback Kyler Murray runs in for a touchdown as time expires during the fourth quarter of an NFL football game against the Las Vegas Raiders Sunday, Sept. 18, 2022, in Las Vegas.

Associated Press

to get in a rhythm, you try and slow it down as best as you can," Frazier said. "You need someone to make a play. It's usually a collective effort, a balance between what you're doing on offense, what you're doing on defense, what you're doing on special teams. It takes all three to try to slow that opponent down once they get in a rhythm."

Kyler Murray and the rest of Arizona's offense found that rhythm after trailing

Las Vegas 20-0 at halftime. Murray had a spectacular second half and the Cardinals won on a fumble return in overtime.

"(The) reason why they found success is their players performed," Graham said. "They did a good job. Guys made plays for them. ... We all have a job to do. It always comes down to performance and they did a good job and made plays when they needed it, and they won the game."

Teams that execute better down the stretch often win. Coaches who make necessary adjustments in the second half give their team an opportunity to overcome early mistakes and rally. Having a quarterback who remains calm and instills confidence in his teammates helps. Tua Tagovailoa threw four of his six touchdown passes in the fourth quarter to bring Miami back from a 35-14 deficit at Baltimore.

"That last drive we had, it really showed me who he is as a leader, getting everybody inside of the huddle, telling guys: 'Make sure you run the ball to the official or hand it to (center) Connor (Williams),' " Dolphins receiver Tyreek Hill said. "Just small things to save time, and be able for us to go down the field and make a play." Tim Tebow, the 2007 Heisman Trophy winner and two-time national champion at Florida, led six fourth-quarter comebacks in 14 career NFL starts. He said staying positive and avoiding finger-pointing is key for a leader. "You don't let doubt and negativity overtake you," Tebow said on the AP Pro Football Podcast. "When you've had a tough first two or three quarters, whatever it is, it's so easy to get crevices in between you and other players. 'Oh, it's my fault, it's your fault, it's our fault.' But continue to bring people in and not let a wedge come between you and don't let the negativity, don't let the doubt creep in. So, OK, these are the reasons that we haven't had success. It's because of X, Y and Z. And this is the solution. Come together. Here we go. If we make these adjustments, we're OK." □

Laver Cup protester sets court, arm on fire, delays match

LONDON (AP) — A protester lit a portion of the court and his arm on fire during a match at the Laver Cup tennis event Friday, hours before Roger Federer was scheduled to play for the final time before retiring. The episode briefly delayed the action at the start of the second set of Stefanos Tsitsipas' 6-2, 6-1 victory for Team Europe over Diego Schwartzman of Team World at the O2 Arena.

The activist, carrying a lighter and wearing a white T-shirt with a message about private jets, made his way onto the black court and sat down near the net. The person

eventually was carried away by security guards. "It came out of nowhere. ... I never had an incident like this happen on court," Tsitsipas, the runner-up at the 2021 French Open, said afterward. "I hope he's all right."

Tsitsipas spoke to the chair umpire to make sure it would be safe to continue to play and asked that a mark left on the court be cleaned up.

The protester "has been arrested and the situation is being handled by the police," Laver Cup organizers said in a statement. Federer, a 20-time Grand Slam champion, was slated to compete hours later

Friday, teaming up with longtime rival Rafael Nadal in a doubles match. The 41-year-old Federer hasn't played an official match since Wimbledon in July 2021 and is ending his playing career after a series of operations on his right knee.

There have been other instances of high-profile tennis matches being interrupted in recent years, including during the 2009 final at Roland Garros, when a man went up to Federer and tried to put a hat on his head.

At this year's French Open, in June, a protester wearing a T-shirt with the message "We have 1028 days

left" interrupted the men's semifinal between Casper Ruud and 2014 U.S. Open champion Marin Cilic by

attaching herself to the net with metal wires and glue and kneeling on the court. □



A man sets fire on his hand during protest at a match Team World's Diego Schwartzman against Team Europe's Stefanos Tsitsipas on day one of the Laver Cup tennis tournament at the O2 in London, Friday, Sept. 23, 2022.

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